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HILLSBOROUGH OLD MEETING HOUSE.

1789–1890.

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A MEMOIR

ILLUSTRATED.

By L. W. DENSMORE.

BOSTON:
"Washington Press:" Geo. E. Crosby & Co., Printers,
383 Washington Street.
1890.

HILLSBOROUGH

OLD

MEETING HOUSE.

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OLD MEETING HOUSE, 1890.—(From the South.)

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The thoughtful student of history, tracing the growth of the New England colonies during the first century and a half of their existence, cannot fail to be struck by the identity of the lines of thought and action along which the pioneers of the infant settlements moved. This uniformity of motive and practice is highly suggestive of the stern discipline under which the characters of our immigrant ancestors were formed, and affords the key to the remarkable stability of New England institutions amid abnormal conditions of growth and exposed to severe trials.

The ruling considerations determining the actions of the people to whom I refer were three in number; (1), a location fruitful in resources for the maintenance of the infant settlement; (2), shelter from the inclemency of the climate; (3), provision for the worship of God; to all of which was superadded, until about the middle of the 18th century, the need of security against the incursions of savage foes.

For some years after the first lodgment of Englishmen on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, a cluster of settlements was made along the coast, including Dorchester, Roxbury, Boston, Newtown, now Cambridge, Charlestown, Medford and Malden, all accessible by water, touching elbows, to use a military phrase, and so compactly settled that a fleet runner could pass in safety from one extreme of the colony to another, bearing messages of advice or warning. The influx of immigrants soon making more elbow room desirable, a band of bold men under the lead of Capt. Simon Willard turned their backs on their neighbors, penetrated the wilderness and on 12th Sept. 1635, sat down on the present site of Old Concord, eighteen miles from the mouth of Charles River. Their success emboldened their compatriots dwelling by the sea to make similar ventures, and within a few years other adventurous spirits had dotted the interior of the state as far west as the Connecticut river with new plantations, everywhere planting the germs of infant democracies, which, developing through infinite toil and long endured

hardship, in later years aggregated into the mightiest political force the world has yet seen, a federation of self-governed states, within the lifetime of the present generation cemented with blood and treasure freely expended, into a mighty nation with a united purpose and a common destiny.

In process of time the spirit of adventure over-passed the bounds of the Bay province, and began the planting of similar settlements in New Hampshire, still pursuing in their action the methods in vogue in the outset of New England settlement. Thus, when in 1772, the settlers of Hillsborough, who had some years before returned to their clearings, abandoned about 1745, by reason of constant peril of Indian invasion, felt strong enough to undertake the task of self-government, their first act, after accepting the royal charter and electing town officers, was to settle measures already under way, providing for the organization of a christian church. This memoir, designed simply to commemorate the history of the venerable structure that for the past hundred years has crowned the summit of Meeting House Hill, is in no sense a history of the church that worshipped in that ancient house, but a departure will at the outset be made from the scope of its design as above suggested, to make room for the following interesting extracts from the record of the first day's existence of the town as a political corporation.

Mr. Isaac Baldwin, the Moderator, appointed in advance by Governor John Wentworth to organize the town, having on the 9th day of November, 1772, issued the proper warrant for that purpose, "the free Holders and other inhabitants" in town meeting assembled, on the 24th day of that month, after accepting the royal charter and electing town officers:

"Voted to Renew their Call to Mr. Jonathan Barns to settle in the Work of the Gospell Ministry.

"Voted that Capt. Sam'll Bradford should keep the Counsel at the time ordenation."

Before separating for the day, a goodly number of the citizens organized as a church meeting — the record of which is as follows:

"Hillsborough, Novem'r 24th, 1772.

At a Church meeting it was, Voted unanimously that Mr. Jonathan Barns take the Charge and oversight, of the Church and flock of Christ in this Town aforesaid and that he settle with us in the work of the gospel menestry according to the platform of Church disapline Comanly Called Cambridge platform, so far as it agrees with the word of God or the sacred Scripture.

Voted: that They will give him thirty pounds Lawfull money by way of settlment, and that they give him thirty pounds Lawfull money a year for the first fore years, and that they will give him thirty five pounds Lawfull a year for the next

four year, and then forty pounds a year untill there be 70 famelys in Town, and when there is seventy famelys in Town, he is to be Intitled to fifty pounds a year whether sooner or Later, and is to be fifty pounds a year, from the time of 70 famelys Coming in to the Town till there be 90 families, and after there is 90 families it is to be sixty pounds a year untill there is won hundred and ten famelies in town, and After there is 110 famelies in Town it is to be sixty six pounds thirten shillings and fore pence aneuely so long as he shall Continue in the minestry among us, and forthermore that we will alow him two or three sabbeths in a year to visit his frinds.

The same day Directly after the Church meeting the Town meet and Concored with the Church in giving Mr. Jonathan Barns, a Call to settle with them in the work of the Gospell menestry and would give him a settlement, as saleerey above mentioned and there was Not one oppofing.

TIMOTHY WILKINS
JOSEPH CLARK
BEJN LOVJOY
SAMLL BRADFORD
JOHN MEAD
GEORGE BOOTH
ISAAC ANDREWS
JOSHUA ESTEY
WILLM POPE
SAMLL BRADFORD, Junr
TIMOTHY BRADFORD
} *the Church.*

JOHN SARGENT
NEHEMIAH WILKINS
ANTHONY MORIN
WILLM WILLIAMS
ARCHABLE TAGGART
JONATHAN DURANT
BAXTOR HOW
WILLM JONS
ANDREW WILKINS
SAMLL BRADFORD, 3d
ISAAC BALDWIN
} *the Congregation*

SAMLL BRADFORD
ISAAC ANDREWS
ISAAC BALDWIN
Chose as a Committy to present there Call to the person Elect.

The town meeting and church meeting were held "at the Dwelling house of Samll Bradford inholder," living on Bible Hill, on the farm services were held in the barn, doubtless affording more room than the dwelling house, and that public worship was held in the same building now occupied by George Tuttle. Tradition has it that the ordination for some time after, as was the town meeting in the following May. In the warrant for the regular annual town meeting held 25th Mar. 1773, appear the following articles:

"2ly. to see if the town will agree to buld a meeting house for the Publick worship of God in said town.

3ly. to see where the town will agree to set said house, and also to give the Dementains how Large to buld, and Chuse a Comety to buld said house, see when it shall be bult.

4ly. to see if they will Ratify Establish and Confirm the several maters and things Voted at their meeting held on the 24th Day of Novemr Last past."

Among the proceedings of that meeting

"Voted the aricle Concerning bulding meeting house be Dismissed for this time.

Voted, and hereby Do Ratfy Establish and Confirm all and every artcle, Voted the 24th of Novembr, Last Past, as mentaioned in this warrent, Relative to the Revd Mr. Jonathan Barns as now upon record.

Voted that this meeting be adjurned to the fiftenth of April Next, at ten of the Clock in the fore Noon to Mr. Samll Bradford Junr his barn."

"on the Day the above meeting was Ajurned to was A publick fast."

"at a Legal meeting held on the 4th Day of may by the inhabitance of the town of Hillborough AD 1773"

"Voted 2ly to buld a meeting house this year, the Length 35 feet, Bredth 30 feet and, 9, feet stud."

Voted to set the meeting howse on the Land Colln Hill gave for that purpose.

Voted to Chuse a Commite for Carying on the work of bulding the aforesaid house. Voted, Isaac andrews, John M'Calley Timo.y wilkins, the Cometty.

Voted to alow Capt. Samll Bradford his account for keeping the counsel at the ordenation of the Revrd Jonathn Barns which account was £9-9.-8. Lawfull money.

Voted to alow the settlement of the Revd J onathan Barns which was £30–0–0."

My readers of New England birth do not require to be told that from the earliest settlement of the colonies, provision for public worship and the building of "meeting houses," was strictly the business of the town as a body politic, and that until the increased wealth of the struggling communities justified the erection of town halls, the practice generally was to hold town meetings in them. The term "church" as applied to houses of divine worship, was universally tabooed by public sentiment, the rural population being almost entirely non-conformist, and holding the practices, as well as the designations of things connected with the worship, of the English church in utter abhorrence. Hence always "meeting house," never "church." A commanding elevation something more than a quarter of a mile southeast of the geographical centre of the town, was early designated as the most suitable location for public business and divine worship. Elevated more than 500 feet above the Main street in the Bridge village, commanding a view to the eastward, beyond the Merrimack River, southward nearly to the Massachusetts line, including grand old Monadnock in all its majesty of proportion, westward to the height of land between Merrimack and Connecticut rivers, only limited as to the northern outlook by the Bradford hills, it was and is "beautiful for situation, the joy of the sons of Hillsborough" scattered over the face of the earth. Col. John Hill, the proprietor of the township, had generously granted a tract of land, containing 200 acres, lying on the summit and slopes of the hill, for the support of the ministry. Looking forward to a time when, with an abundant population and increased wealth, it would be in the power of their successors to erect a stately edifice, at once an honor and source

of pride to the community, and of ample capacity for future needs, it was decided not to encumber the summit of the hill with the unpretentious structure their limited means compelled them to build at that juncture, and it was accordingly placed about two hundred feet to the northward of the site afterwards occupied by the building these pages are designed to commemorate. It stood within the limits of the old graveyard, on ground later occupied as a burial place for the family of Rev. Mr. Barns, it being understood that his body rests in ground covered by the pulpit of the original structure.

At a special town meeting held 15th Nov. 1773,

"Voted, to Rais 30 pounds Lawfull towards bulding the meeting-House."

March Meeting, 1774, article 9 in warrant,

"To see if the town will impower the Committee Chosen for Carying on the work of the meeting House to sell the pew ground except one for Mr. barns and Dispose of the Efekts towards finishing the House.'

Dismissed, but at a special meeting on the 27th Day of April, 1774,

"Voted, the Comitte to sell the pew ground at publick vandew and Dispose of the efects for the use of House. Voted, to Vew the ground at the Meeting House spot for a burying place. Voted Timothy wilkins, Daniel McNeall the Committe to Vue the ground for a burying and make Return to the town at the Next meeting."

At special meeting 14th Nov. 1774, 2d article in warrant,

"To see if the town will Rais more money Defray meeting house Charges, or order the Committe to Draw out of the town stock to Clabbord the house,"—"voted to Rais twenty Dolers towards finishing the meeting hous to be paid into the hands of the Committee for that end,"

the first mention of the dollar currency in the town records. The business and accounts of the country were mostly carried on in English currency for many years thereafter. This meeting was held in the meeting house, not yet finished, as were those in succeeding years, and it was doubtless occupied by this time for divine worship when the weather would permit, though nothing appears in the public records indicating the exact time when it began to be so used. It was a time of anxiety and general gloom; great events were portended by the signs of the times, and the days that tried men's souls were near at hand. Years elapsed before the house was finished, and the obvious inference from a close study of the records is that for two or three years little work was done on it. The winter of 1775–6 being a hard one, an effort was made at the '76 March meeting to remove the meetings to the house of Deacon John Mead for a part of the time, but was negatived, and a special meeting called in the next month to choose a new committee to finish

the house, and at another meeting held in September the voters appointed a special auditing committee to look into the accounts connected therewith, and again refused to remove the meetings elsewhere, it being this time proposed to hold them at the house of Joseph Symonds, living where Alonzo Tuttle now does—owner of the first bible in town, from which circumstance the hill was called Bible Hill.

The auditing committee above mentioned were unable to present a report of settlement for the work of building. The business of the country had been paralyzed by the sacrifice necessary to carry on the war, and the excessive inflation of the currency, which produced a distress never since known. In one of these years Rev. Mr. Barns cheerfully gave the town his entire salary, trusting Providence for the support of his growing family. About this time, as his wife many years later told Mrs. Sally Holden Hartwell, grandmother of the writer, their circumstances were so narrow that when ministers from abroad were expected as guests of her husband, she was compelled to hide her loaves of brown bread, the best she could afford, to keep her hungry children from picking at them between meals, and making them unpresentable at the table! At another time it took the entire amount of Mr. Barns' salary as fixed by contract to buy a pig, with the depreciated currency then in use.

The taxes were mainly paid in kind during this period, and the tax apportioned to this town in the summer of 1780, for the purchase of beef for the continental army, was £9,702, and Rev. Mr. Barns receipted November 13, 1780, for £2,848–4–4, as *part* of his salary for that year.

The memorable vote passed May 4, 1773, fixing the site for a house of divine worship, though only ratifying a foregone conclusion, gave a new direction to the aspirations of the earnest, thoughtful spirits already looking on Hillsborough as their future home. To them Meeting House Hill was in anticipation the Mount Zion, to which their hearts at once began as never before to turn, and of which they were ready to say with the Psalmist, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King," and "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up into the house of the Lord." For years to come, nearly all the tribes of the town *did* go up, some on horseback, more on foot, coming from the most distant parts of the town, sometimes following the few roads, scarcely yet begun, to be rendered passable only in coming years, oftener finding their way through the dense forests in paths marked by blazed trees. Between the acceptance of the charter, 24th Nov. 1772, and the designation of a site for the meeting house, three roads were laid

out by the selectmen, and up to the time of beginning work on the present structure, seventeen more roads were laid out as appears of record. Of these roads, very crudely and obscurely described, as a stranger would say, eleven had their objective point, of either beginning or termination, at the meeting house, or at some point in a road already laid out leading to or from the meeting house. Courses and distances were of little account; every one knew the meeting house—what need to be more exact?

The earliest tax list that can be found spread upon the town records is that for the year 1776, containing 49 taxables, of which two were widows, and one, Major Raley, beyond the age at which polls might be assessed. In addition to the drawback arising from the smallness of their numbers, they were handicapped by the necessity of improving their farms, making roads over a hilly, rocky region, carrying on a life and death struggle with the mother country, involving the sending away of several of their able bodied men, always at a premium in a new country, and a still harder struggle, if the expression is admissible, with a depreciated currency, accompanied by the almost total disappearance of hard money from the country. There were then no California, no Colorado, to fall back on for a supply of the precious metals. And yet, moving with exceeding slowness, but never abandoning the endeavor, they did at last complete an humble temple in which to worship the Lord of hosts.

The close of the revolutionary war brought a cessation of a part of the difficulties against which the people of the town had struggled—the currency, if it had not recovered its normal value, was at least improving—the town was reasonably supplied with mills and bridges, and with blacksmiths to forge the nails and hinges necessary for use in building—the population, represented by a list of 140 taxable residents, and a non-resident tax list averaging equivalent to from fifteen to twenty additional residents, was practically quadrupled, at least as to the ability to carry on any new public enterprise, and had fairly outgrown the capacity of the house to accommodate it, either in the matter of Sunday worship or for town meetings, to say nothing of those extraordinary occasions sure to swell their numbers by the accession of visitors from neighboring towns. The time, looked forward to from the beginning, when it should become a duty and a high privilege to undertake the construction of a new house, on what was then thought a grand and liberal scale, had in the minds of many of the people fully arrived, and had begun to be the subject of earnest discussion, when in 1788 a new face was put on the matter and a strong incentive to haste in commencing the work and promptness in its execution, by a proposition partially unfolded to the

selectmen by Joseph Symonds, deacon of the church many years, some time town treasurer, and up to that time moderator of a greater number of town meetings than any other citizen.

Articles 2, 3 and 4 of a warrant calling a special town meeting for Nov. 4, 1788, read as follows:

"2ly. to see if the town will Build, board and Shingle a Meeting house in said town in Eighteen Months from the date; on Certain proposels that shall bee exhibited in Said Meeting — or any other way that the town shall think more proper.

3ly. to Draft a plan for said house or Choose a Committe for that purpose.

4ly. to Prescribe Methods for building sd house and act accordingly thereon — and any other buisness Relitive thereto that shall be thought Necessary on sd Day."

Pursuant to said warrant the town voted:

"2ly. voted to Build a Meeting house within Eighteen Months agreable to the proposels made by Deacon Joseph Symonds.

3ly. voted to Choose a Committe to Draft a plan for said house. Voted the Committe Consist of five Men — (viz.) — Revd Jono Barns Daries Abbot John Dutton Benja Peirce Isaac Andrews Junr—Committe.

4ly. Voted to Build said house sixty-two feet in Length & fifty in wedth with three porches. Voted when the plan of said house is Drawn—to sell the pew ground for the purpose of purchasing Nails, timber, of Every Kind for said house, and that a purchasor of Each pew pay Eighteen shillings in Cash at a certain time which shall be hereafter affixed by a Committe, and if the above Mentioned Meterials are Not procured at the time that shall be set them by the Committe, then the Cash to be paid to the Committee for the purpose of purchasing Said Meterials, and in Case the pew ground Does More than purchase the Meterials which have been Mentioned, then the purchesors of said pews to turn in Neat stock or grain to pay of the workmen. Voted to Choose a Committe to Carry on the work of said house. Voted the Committee consist of five Men (viz.) Magr Benja Peirce Isaac Andrews Junr John Dutton Wm Taggart Paul Coolidge Committe.

Adiourned for fifteen minutes. Met accordingly. Adiourned to the thirteenth Day of Novemr Instant at one o'clock afternoon to this place. Novemr 13th 1788 Met agreeable to aiournment.

Voted Otis How Moderator protempore.

Voted to except the plan of said house presented by the Committe appointed to Draft the same.

Voted an addition to the Committe appointed to Carry on the work of said house — of four men (viz.) Daries Abbot, Otis How, John McCalley, Calvin Stevins.

Voted said Committee sell the pew ground in sd house. Voted to Choose three Surveyors to survey the timbers, Board and shingles of said house—(viz.) Daries Abbot, John Dutton, Isaac Andrews Junr Surveyors.

Adiourned to the twentyeth day of Novemr Instent at Nine oclock A. M. to this place.

Novemr 20th 1788 Met agreeable to adiournment.

Voted—said town build and finish the pews in said house.

Voted—one porch to be taken off said house.

Voted—said house be set fronting to the south.

Adiourned to the Eleventh Day of Decemr Next at one oclock afternoon to this place.

Decembr 11th 1788 Met agreable to adiournment.

Adiourned to the fifteenth day of Decemr Instent at two Oclock Afternoon to this place.

Decemr 15th 1788 Met agreeable to adiournment.

Voted—the Committe appointed to carry on the work of said house sell the pew ground etc. :— Build said pews and finish said house — and the meeting Desolved. (High time it should, one would say!)

A true Record pr John Dutton T-Clerk."

"Proposals to the town of Hillsboro.

I, Joseph Symonds of Hillsborough in the County of Hillsborough and State of New hampshire, Do now give the home farm of Samuel Symonds Late of Hillsboro Deseased with all the priviledges and appertinances thereto belonging, as a free gift, agreeable to the Desire of his Son Deceased, provided that the town Build Board and Shingle a Meeting house in Said town in Eighteen Months from the Date of this Meeting caled to hear and act upon sd proposels; said house to be set upon the Land that has been appropriated for that Use by Col: Hill and Likewise in finishing sd house that they Build a convenient seat in the fore part of the front Gallery and always reserve the same for the use of the singers in sd town; always reserving that the town bind and oblige themselves in case the said Saml Symonds's other Lands together with his Effects Do not pay his Debts and funeral Charges the town cause the same to be paid—Likewise that the town free me the sd Joseph Symonds My Heirs and assigns forever from any suit or suits at Law which may hereafter arise by Reason of any Land Titles which the sd Samuel Symonds either gave or Received provided sd sute or sutes at Law Do not amount to more than the value of said home farm, and also that I the said Joseph Do engage for myself my heirs and and assigns to bear an equal proportion according to what I have Received out of his the said Saml Symonds's estate—furthermore, it is always to be Remembered that I Reserve the improvement of sd farm till the Eighteen Months above mentioned are expired, and also reserving the boards upon the bac side Roof of the barn and also some loose Boards and plank on sd farm otherwise the town pay for the same. These proposals agreed to and Ratified by said town to remain in full force and virtue, otherwise to be voide and of none effect.

Given under my hand this fourth Day of Novemr AD 1788.

Attest Isaac Andrews Joseph Symonds."
John Dutton

The work of preparing material for the new building now went briskly forward. The sound of the axe was soon heard in the adjacent woods, preparing square timber for the frame. John Hartwell, grandfather of the writer, then fourteen years old, was fired with a laudable ambition to haul the first stick of square timber from the woods to the site of the house. He communicated his wish to Rev. Mr. Barns, and meeting approval, he, in company with Mr. Barns' two boys, near his own age, yoked up a pair of oxen belonging to their father, the trio starting for the woods in high glee on their mission. Arriving in due time in front of the hospitable mansion of Mr. Barns, erected in 1773,

and now occupied in a good state of preservation by his great-grandson, Theodore Barns, the minister was seen standing on the door-step with a rousing mug of hot flip, ready to reward and warm up the adventurous boys, who with new courage proceeded to their destination. A sufficiency of timber for the frame was hauled to the site, and logs to make the lumber necessary for finishing the building, delivered in the mill yards during winter, on the abundant snow, which then as now furnished the readiest access to the rocky timber lots of the town. Examination of the old buildings erected in this vicinity about that time, as well as of the building itself, shows that the task of selecting and obtaining first-class building material was a comparatively trifling one. The writer has seen first-class pine boards cut in Hartford, Vt., in 1849, sawn on an old-fashioned upright sawmill, twelve feet long and scaling thirty-nine feet surface, and of as fine a grain and quality as could be found at any time in any part of the country, and there is no question that trees of similar size and quality were by no means scarce in the valley of Contoocook river, one hundred years ago.

Discipline and the principle of subordination to authority in all public affairs were relatively of far more importance in those days than they now are in any portion of the country. And so it was the regular thing, as the time for raising the frame of the meeting house approached, to make suitable provision beforehand, that everything might be done decently and in order. A special town meeting was called for Monday, Aug. 31, 1788,

"To see what provesion and in what way and Manner they will provide for the Raising of the Meeting house proposed to be Built in said town." "Voted there be provesion Made on the Spot near the Meeting house for spectators,—as those employed in Raising said house.

Voted to Raise sixty pounds for the purpose of Raising said Meeting house in said town in produce as follows (viz) Beef and Mutten at twenty shillings per hundred, Merchantable Rey at four shillings per bushel indian corn three shillings per Bushel Voted the Committee appointed to carry on the work of said house be a Committee for the Raising of said house."

The unsophisticated reader who is at a loss to comprehend the importance of arranging at a town meeting to provide for spectators at so commonplace an affair as the raising a frame for a building, should consider that in that benighted age no such round of public diversions existed as at present, for the occasional entertainment of the populace, either in town or country. Diversions and amusements had always been and until more than a generation later were, in a large sense, under the ban of public opinion, which allowed little time for anything not strictly utilitarian in its character. June training and "Cork Muster" days

were in a sense military necessities, barely justifying the balls following them. Apple-paring and husking bees had in them a saving element of utility, partially condoning the general hilarity of the occasions. It was no wonder that so signal an interruption of the monotonous drudgery of farm life as the raising of a structure of nobler proportions than any existing in town, needing the services of most of the able-bodied men in town, should be of enough interest to their wives and daughters to induce them to make the day a holiday and grace the occasion with their presence, offering, in the ceaseless chatter of their tongues and the occasional music of squalling babies, a marked contrast to the stentorian tones of the foreman on the work of raising the frame. These were a large majority of the spectators it was proposed to provide for, and were present in force, while a goodly number of people from adjoining towns were present. It is in one case fortunate that this was the case, as an incident connected therewith presents the only known means of determining the exact date of the occasion, which I do not find set down in any record of those days. Simon Hartwell had removed from Carlisle, Mass. and settled in the North-east part of the town, on the farm where J. M. Ray now lives, fully a mile and a half, up hill and down dale, from the meeting house. Mrs. H. walked over to the raising in the forenoon of that day, and home about night. Retiring at the usual hour, she soon became aware of an imminent crisis close at hand; an alarm was given, "the granny" was sent for in haste, and before midnight her second child, Nancy, afterwards wife of George Ashby, was born, Sept. 17, 1789. The anxious matrons in the neighborhood, on the *qui vive* for news, were cheered next morning by the welcome news passed from house to house, that "mother and child were doing well!" My first intimation of the trip and its results, was obtained from my great aunt Patty (Hartwell) Foster, possessing an unusually good memory of names and dates, a few months before her death, and later I obtained confirmation of it from Thomas Ashby of North Brookfield, Mass., son of Nancy Hartwell Ashby, whose birthday was identical with that of the memorable raising.

Dec. 6th, at a special town meeting

"Voted to Reconsider the vote passed by the inhabitants of said town on the thirty-first day of August, 1789, for the purpose of Raising sixty pounds in produce and give those credit who have paid towards the same."

Tradition has it that four barrels of rum was considered a necessary provision towards the work of raising, and was so provided. There is no doubt that this feature of the case received the unanimous approval of those present and interested.

Nov. 20th, 1788, "the pew grounds" were sold, but not recorded for several years, as appears below.

(Vol. 2, Town record.)

"Hillsborough, April 8th, 1797.

The following record witnefseth, and Confirms a title to person which purchased a pew, or pews in the Meeting-house lately built in sd town, agreable to the doings of sd town in the year 1795, which proceedings are as follows (viz.)

To see what Method the town will take to establish a title to persons which purchased pews in the Meeting house lately built in sd town—agreeably to which artle the Town passed the following vote. Voted that as the pews in the Meeting-house are all Numbred it shall be accounted a sufficient title to the respictive owner of a pew to have the same recorded by the number of the pew on the Town book, expressing the flower it stands on, the sum given for sd pew when sold at vendue—and the transfers if any has since been—and a certificate expressing the purport of this vote, Made out to each owner—and attested by the town clerk.

A true coppey as recorded on Vol. first.

CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

The pew No one on the lower flowr,—the parsonage pew,—or the property of the Town—Calvin Stevens T Clerk—

The following number of pews were sold at publick Vendue by the committee appointed by the town for that purpose—Novemr 20th 1788—

No 2 the pew Numr two on the lower floor, bid off by Joseph Symonds for £10 11*s.*

[The remaining bids, expressed in the same verbiage, cut short to save space.]

No 3 to Nathaniel Symonds, £10 7*s*
No 4 to Otis How at £8
No 5 to Perkins Andrews, at £8
No 6 to William Gammell, at £8
No 7 to Nehemiah Wilkins, at £8
No 8 to Asaph Wilkins, at £8
No 9 to Capt Archd Taggert, at £9
No 10 to Lt John McCalley, at £8 16*s*
No 11 to David Williams, at £9 6*s*
No 12 to Moses Steel, at £9 10*s*
No 13 to James McCalley, at £9 6*s*
No 14 to Benjamin Peirce Esqr, at £13
No 15 to Isaac Andrews Esqr, at £11 12*s*
No 16 to Samuel Gibson, at £10 13*s*
No 17 to Uriah Cooledge, at £9 6*s*
No 18 to Eliphalet Bradford, at £8 13*s*
No 19 to Jeduthun baldwin, at £9
No 20 to John Shed, at £9
No 21 to Archibald Taggert, at £9
No 22 to Lt William Taggert, at £9 1*s*
No 23 to Samuel Bradford, at £9 5*s*
No 24 to Benjamin Dutton, at £8
No 25 to Isaac Andrews Junr, at £9 2*s*

No 26 to Thomas Millor, at £10 2*s*
No 27 to Calvin Stevens, at £8 10*s*
No 28 to David Marshel, at £10 1*s*
No 29 to Wm Little, at £9 14*s*
No 30 to John Gibson, at £9 6*s*
No 31 to Wm Little, at £9
No 32 to Wm Little, at £8.
No 34 to Daniel McNeal, at £8.
No 35 to William Coughlin, at £9 5*s*.
No 37 to Wm, Booth, at £7 19*s*.
No 38 to Nath'el Heywood, at £9 12*s*.
No 39 to Darius Abbott, at £8 19*s*.
No 40 to Revd Jonathan Barns, at £8.
No 41 to Asa Andrews, at £12 2*s*.
No 42 to Daniel McNeal, at £12 9*s*.
No 43 to George Booth, at £8 8*s*.
No 45 to James Dutton, at £8.
No 46 to Archabald Taggert, at £8.
No 47 to Jonathan Serjeant, at £8 6*s*
No 48 to Benjamin Peirce, Esqr, at £8 19*s*
No 49 to Joseph Nichols, at £8
No 50 to Thaddeus Munroe, at £8.
No 51 to Perkins Andrews, at £12 14*s*
No 53 to John Dutton, Esq, at £8 1*s*

The following pews sold at Vendue by the Committee appointed by the Town for that purpose, Sept 12th 1793

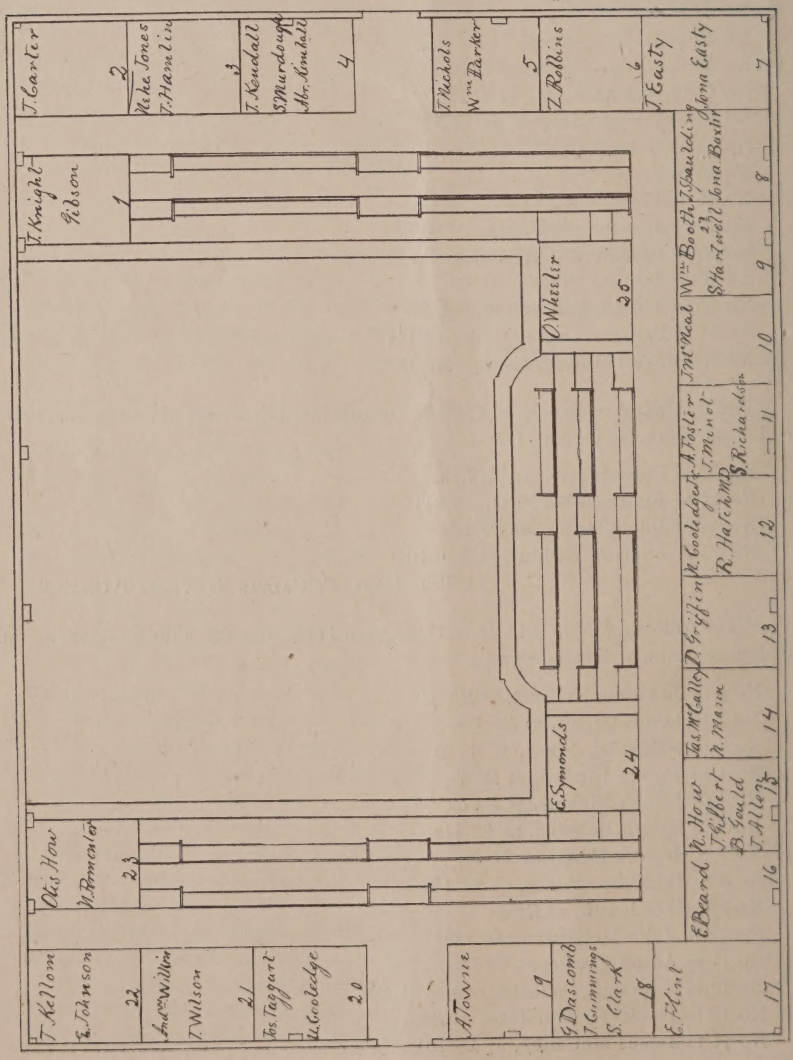
No 52 to Robert Karr, at £12 3*s*
No 44 to Jonathan Serjeant, at £11
No 35 to John Curtice, at £9 12*s*
No 36 to Andrew Wilkins, at £10 10*s*

A True Copy, Pr Calvin Stevens, T Clerk."

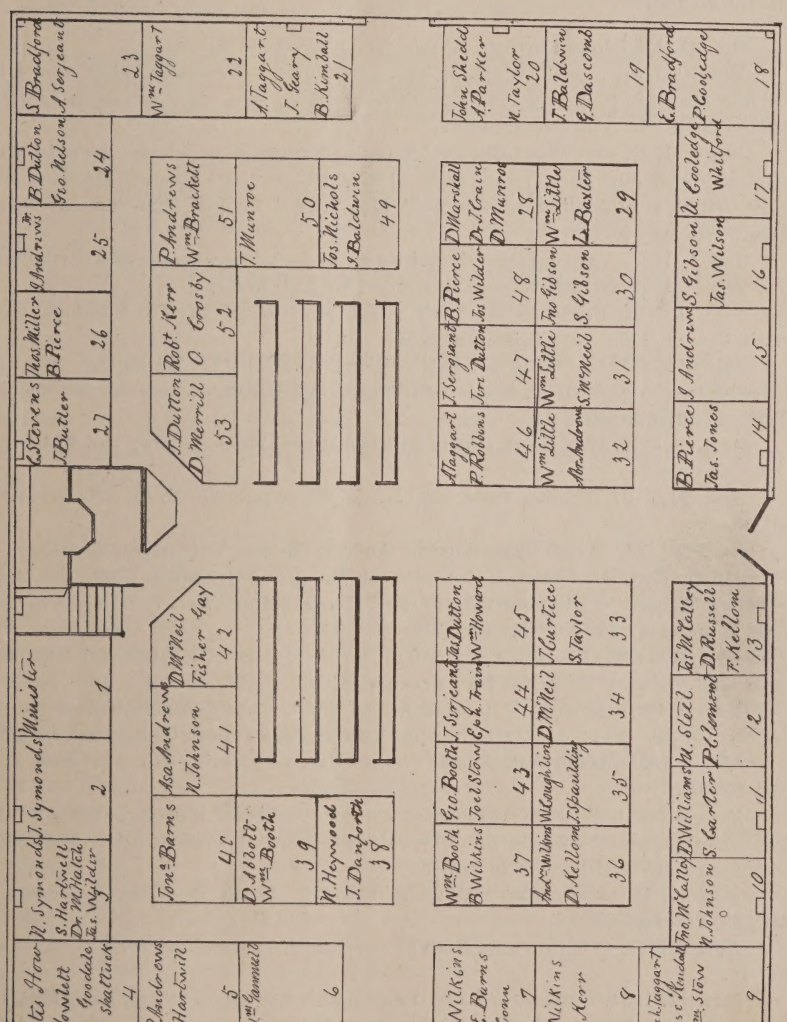
" The following pews sold June 17th, anno 1794 — on the gallery floor in the meeting house in sd Hillsborough

No 1 to Jonathan Knights, at £5 8*s*
No 2 to James Carter, at £8 10*s*
No 3 to Nehemiah Jones, at £8 6*s*
No 4 to Joshua Kindall, at £4 7*s*
No 5 to Joseph Nichols, at £4 5*s*
No 6 to Zach'h Robbins, at £8 11*s*
No 7 to Joshua Easty, at £7 17*s*
No 8 to Jacob Spaulding, at £4 14*s*
No 9 to Wm Booth, at £5 8*s*
No 10 to John McNeal, at £8 11*s*
No 11 to Aaron Foster, at £6 7*s*
No 12 to Nathaniel Cooledge, Junr, at £9
No 13 to Daniel Griffin, Junr, at £6 5*s*
No 14 to James McCalley, at £8 10*s*

No 15 to Nathan How, at £5 14*s*
No 16 to Elijah Bard, at £4 8*s*
No 17 to Ebenezer Flint, at £7 2*s*
No 18 to George Descomb at £6 16*s*.
No 19 to Archelaus Town at £4 6*s*.
No 20 to Joseph Taggert at £4 4*s*.
No 22 to Thomas Killom at £7 16*s*.
No 23 to otis How at £5 3*s*.
No 24 to Eliphalet Symonds at £8 9*s*.
No 25 to oliver wheeler at £9 2*s*.



The range in prices shows the bidders were in some degree respecters of persons, as no other hypothesis fully explains the difference in prices paid by Benjamin Peirce, already become a prominent factor in politics (twice governor of the state in later years), and James McCalley, for pews precisely similar in location, at £13 and £9–6. Deacon Joseph Symonds was the largest tax payer, but doubtless awarded some consideration on account of his connection with the gift from his son Samuel.



The uppermost name in each pew is that of original owner; names following are those of occupants in Rev. Mr. Lawton's time.

Isaac Andrews followed close on his heels in the matter of property, and no doubt his neighbors were willing to see him pay well for his pew on that score, possibly a few shillings more for his proximity to the rising man of the town. Asa Andrews and Daniel McNeal paid well for front seats in the synagogue. The four gallery pews next the entrances went low by reason of the likelihood, sure to be realized, of drafts of cold air admitted by late comers in the winter months.

Not all the subsequent transfers appear of record. Most of them are noted below.

Oct. 31, 1795 John Curtice sold pew No 33 to Daniel Killom.

May 10, 1797. David Williams sold pew No 11 to Joshua Kindall who sold one half Sept 18, 1798 to Peter Clement for $18.00, same date the other half to Samuel Carter for $18, first cost $31.

July 1. 1797. Dr Wm Little sold No 31 to Nathan How, who on the same day sold one half to Joel Stow, (who resold 18 Sept 1798 to Peter Clement for $18.) the other half to Dea. John Mead who sold May 7, 1804 to Joel Stow for the same price, first cost $30.

July 4, 1797, Arch. Taggard sold No 21 to Joseph Geary, for $30. first cost,

July 7, 1797, No 9 to Samuel Ellenwood for $30. first cost.

Sept. 9, 1797, Ellenwood sold half of this pew for $15 to Wm Shattuck, who resold Dec 14, 1789, to Wllliam Taggard.

July 31, 1797, Dr. Little sold half of pew No. 29 to Wm Howard for $22.50, the other half Aug. 3, 1797, to Asahel Going and Josiah Richardson for $17.33, in all $39.83, first cost $32 33.

Sept. 9, 1797, Wm Booth sold to Abial Shattuck No 9 gallery, for $18, first cost.

Sept. 21, 1797, Thomas Miller sold Benja Pierce pew No. 26 for $30, first cost $33.66.

Dec. 13, 1797, Jacob Spaulding sold Andrew Sargent half of No. 3, gallery.

Jan. 2, 1798, Nathaniel Heywood sold No. 38 to Nehemiah Jones for $35, reserving a seat "during my natural life," dying before Mar. 1, 1799. May 23, 1799, Jones sold to Fisher Gay for $50.

June 21, 1798, Otis How sold half of No. 4 to Joshua Kindall, for $20, the other half to James Eaton for $20, first cost $26.66.

Mar. 8, 1800, Jona. Knights of Bradford sold to Jona. Dwinell, half of No. 1, gallery, for $9. Sept. 15, 1800, the other half to James Gibson, $9, first cost $18.

Jan. 1, 1801, Asaph Wilkins sold Nathan Carr of Deering No 8 for $30, first cost $26.66.

Feb. 21, 1801, William Cofrin "of Putney, county of Windsor, ' tate of Vermont, Husbandman," sold No. 35 to Dea Jacob Spaulding for $34, first cost $30.83, witnesses Rebecca Killom, Wm Cofrin.

Mar. 17, 1801, Nehemiah Wilkins sold No 7 to Josiah Beard of Francestown for $38, first cost $26.66.

Apr. 6, 1802, Otis How sold Nath'l Parmenter No 23, gallery, for $15, first cost $17.16.

Mar. 12, 1804, Nathan How sold John Gilbert half of No 15, gallery, for $11, other half for $11 to Benja Gould, who resold for same price 15 Apr. 1806, to John Allen.

May 30, 1804, Darius Abbott sold No 39 to Nath. Johnson for $30, first cost $29.83.

Oct. 30, 1804, Daniel McNeal sold No 42 to Peter Robbins for $45, first cost $41.50.

Nov. 2, 1805, Eliphalet Bradford sold No 23 to Andrew Sargent for $40, first cost $30.83.

Apr. 16, 1806, Joseph Taggard sold Elijah Fisk half No 21, gallery, for $10.

Mar. 23, 1807. Archelaus Town sold David Livermore one third of No 19. gallery, for $4.72.

Aug. 30, 1808. Andrew Wilkins sold No. 21 gallery for $26 to Silas Jones, who sold half of the same Sept 2. to Thomas Wilson for $16.

[Clarissa Beard, who married Mr. Wilson in 1806, celebrated her centennial May 12, 1889, and is still living, the only witness by whose aid I have been able to verify my arrangement of the numbering of the pews on the lower floor.]

Aug. 5, 1812. John McCalley sold Nath. Johnson Jr. half No 10 for $11.

Jan. 2, 1813 Benj. Hills sold half No 18 gallery to Nath. Johnson for $11.

Jan. 10, 1813 Moses Steel sold No 12 to Wm Hutchinson and Hugh Smith for $23.

Feb. 15, 1814. Joshua Easty sold Dan'l Bennett half No 7 gallery for $10.

July 17, 1815. Jeduthan Baldwin sold Geo. Dascomb No 19 for $40.

Here follows a conveyance differing somewhat from those given heretofore, though it seems probable that in cases where a second conveyance was made on the same day it was really for the purpose of securing a loan of the purchase money. The party to this transaction was an original purchaser.

"To all people to whom this presents, bill of sale, shall come, Greeting. I ——— ——— of Hillsborough in the county of Hillsborough and State of New Hampshire yeoman for and in consideration of thirty five dollars To me in Hand paid by Jonathan Webster of said Hillsborough in the County and State aforesaid joyner — the Receipt whereof I do acknowledge and am therewith fully and intirely satisfied, have granted bargoned & sold and by these presents do grant bargon & sell unto the said Jonathan a pew in the gallery in the Meeting house in Hillsborough, being in the front of said gallery and is No ——.

To have & to hold the said granted & bargoned premises to him the said Jonathan Webster his heirs administrators and assigns to their own proper use benefit forever — and I the sd ——— ——— do avouch myself to be the true and lawfull owner of the sd Granted premises—and I have full power & lawfull athority To dispose of the same in manner aforesaid—and furthermore I the sd ——— ——— do hereby covenant and agree to warrant and Defend the said granted primises to the said Jonathan Webster his heirs and assigns against the lawfull Claims and demands of all persons whomsoever — in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this 16th day of Novemr annodom 1798.

The condition of the within obligation is such that if the within named ——— ——— doth pay the sd. Jonathan Webster twenty seveu dollars and sixty two cents

and interest for the same in two years from the within date then the within Obligation to be nul and void otherwise to be be in full force and Virtue — Signed sealed & delivered in presence of us.

JOHN DUTTON.
LUCY DUTTON.

True Copy: CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

A friend suggests that the party making the above conveyance could only go one step further, and mortgage his cemetery lot.

The first sale of pews brought in £446–15*s*. The later sales increased this amount to £656–5*s*, to which add £120, net result of the Symonds donation and £140 voted later by the town, making a total of £916–5*s* or $3,054.16 in decimal currency, for which the building appears to have been completed. It stands over a granite ledge, which crops out to the surface in places, elsewhere having a shallow covering of drift interspersed with fragments of stone, thinly covered with the upland loam characteristic of a granite formation. Very little excavation was needed for the foundation, made of rubble picked up off the surface of the adjacent region. The underpinning on the south face of the work was cut and hammered with a good degree of care, but that under the remaining part of the building is of uncut fragments of granite, faced by cleavages in the rock, receiving no work from the stone cutter beyond occasionally breaking or spalling with a sledge to improve the condition in which the forces of nature left them, to passably improve the joints in the work. The stones placed before the entrance doors are large blocks picked up on the surface of the ground, with no limit as to territory to select on, but that imposed by the expense of long haul, their upper surfaces formed by natural cleavage, the selection determined simply by preference for the least irregularity in outline of the four sides. The contour of the bottom was of no consequence, being imbedded in soil not likely to be heaved by frost. The stone at the east entrance, several inches higher than either of the others, served admirably as a horse block on which the women might dismount on arrival, and from which they could remount at departure, a favored few being the owners of side saddles, while the majority mounted on pillions behind the men of their respective families.

The house is sixty-four feet, eight inches in length, and forty-eight feet, six inches in width. Height to ceiling inside twenty-eight feet, height to gallery ten feet and a half, paneled and moulded front five feet high, panels showing 24x54 inches. The frame is of oak timber. The clapboards were cut four feet in length, and scarfed or ship-lapped at their joints with each other, nailed with wrought nails, for which the holes were bored with a hand gimlet by Simon Hartwell. The southern

entrance, with double doors, is 4 ft. 10 in. by 9 ft. East and west entrances 3 ft. 4 in. by 6 ft. 5 in., doors to audience room 3 ft. 9 in. by 6 ft. 7 in.* The aisles separating the body pews from those next the walls were elevated about 7½ inches above the central aisles, a similar ascent leading into the wall pews. Pew doors 22 in. wide, height of pews 40½ in. of plain paneled work surmounted by a rail, which was put on continuous next the aisle, and tradition has it that the joiners exacted from each pew owner a quart of rum as a prerequisite to cutting out the rail and hanging the door to his pew. Joseph Geary, owner by purchase of No. 21, refused this tribute, and on the first Sunday of occupancy of his pew brought to "meeting" a couple of short ladders by which his family might gain access to the pew. The next Sunday his door was properly hung and he had by the strategy above noted, saved his rum for his own use, and probably gained the reputation of a sharp but mighty mean man. In the rear of pews numbered 41, 42, 52, 53, were free seats, provided for the aged members of the congregation, who desired to be as near as possible to the minister, and several of whom were not able to be the owners of pews. These seats were taken out between 1825 and 1830, and their places occupied by pews. Most of the pews had seats on three sides, some having seats on all sides, elevated 17 in. above the floor, and hinged to allow of being raised while their occupants stood during prayer and the singing service.

The pulpit was reached by a flight of steps with an abrupt ascent, (rise, 9¾ in. run, 8¼,) to a landing, whence a couple more of steps lead to the platform. The reading desk was semi-octagonal in form. Over it hangs the antique sounding board, at an elevation of 7 ft. above the platform, octagonal in shape, 5 ft. 9 in. across and 13 ft. 4½ in. below ceiling. Under the pulpit were two receptacles, closed by sash and glass, one of which contained the vessels used in the communion service, the other filled with a small library of religious books, including several volumes of sermons, from which, on the Sabbaths when the society were without regular preaching, sermons were read by different persons appointed by the deacons. Franklin Pierce, while studying law at the lower village, occasionally officiated as reader on these occasions. In Rev. Mr. Lawton's time, a colored minister from Boston, known as Brother Paul, occasionally visited Hillsborough and

* The writer has seen a church edifice on the bank of Malden creek in Buchanan Co., Mo., on the Agency road from St. Joseph to Plattsburg, built for the Southern M. E. church at a time when hoop skirts were having their wildest boom, the trustees of which required the builder to limit the width of the doors to twenty-six inches for the avowed purpose of excluding the obnoxious skirts aforesaid, the obvious result being to also bar out many of the young ladies they contained, *and* to cause a decided falling off in the revenue of the society worshipping in that house.

was always invited to occupy the pulpit, by Mr. Lawton. These occasions had great interest for the children of the congregation, whose attention was greatly attracted by the, at that time, novel spectacle. He was a preacher of good ability, and invariably drew crowded houses.

Above the pulpit is placed a tablet commemorating the generous gift* made by Mr. Samuel Symonds, which bears the following inscription:

THIS MONUMENT IN MEMORY OF

Mr. Samuel Symonds,

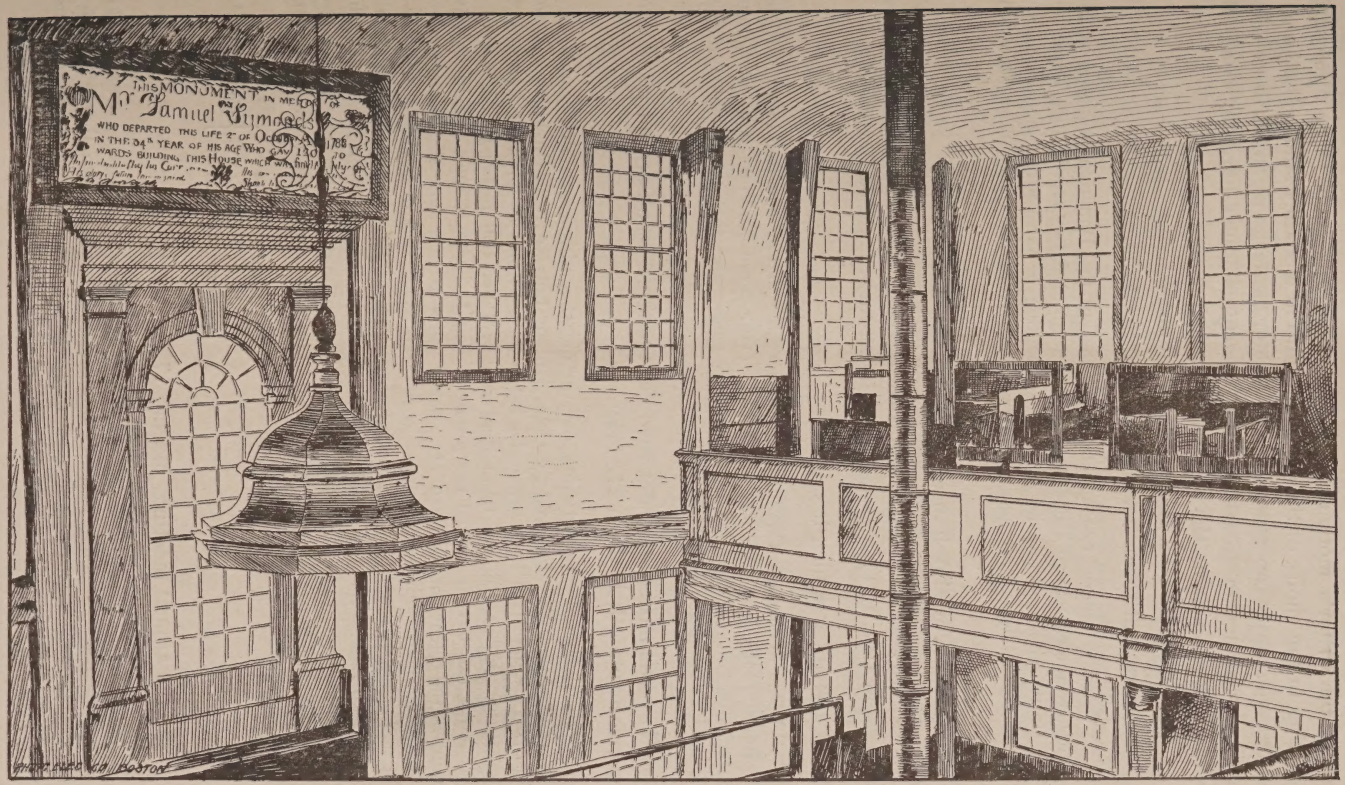
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 2d OF OCTOBER, A. D. 1788, IN THE 34th YEAR OF HIS AGE, WHO GAVE 120£ TOWARDS BUILDING THIS HOUSE, WHICH WAS finished July 1794.

His hands while they his GIFT *bestow'd*
His glory's future harvest sow'd.
This sweet remembrance it is just
Should flourish while he sleeps in dust.

The east and west porches are 14 feet long, 14½ feet wide, each having entrances at the end and on the South face, and a flight of stairs nearly four feet in width with landing and return, to reach the galleries in the body of the house. The gallery fronts are supported on columns, each turned out of a solid piece of timber, having a base 13 inches square and 32 inches high, the swell of the turned section being 9.7 inches in diameter. The choir occupied the front of the South gallery, facing the pulpit, the women at the right and the men at the left, the performers on instruments occupying the transverse seat at the extreme left, backed by pew No. 24, the leader occupying a short seat at the extreme right, hinged to the gallery front, so it might be raised to allow the singers occupying the front seat to pass, but not shown on the plan of the galleries, on page 14.

Among the young women of those days the leadership of the "treble singers" was accounted the post of honor. During the use of the "Bridgewater Collection," under the leadership of Justin Holden, maternal great uncle of the writer, one of the most successful teachers and leaders ever employed in the old meeting-house, the tenor parts were sung by female voices, selected for their special adaptation to those parts, which were in that collection generally intended and arranged for female voices; a notable example of such adaptation existing in the per-

* The farm, on the west side of the river, was sold by the agents appointed by the town for that purpose, and having passed through different hands is now occupied by A. B. Kimball.


THIS MONUMENT IN MEMORY OF
Mr Samuel Symmes
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE 2ND OF OCTOBER
IN THE 34TH YEAR OF HIS AGE WHO
WARDS BUILDING THIS HOUSE

GALLERY.—From Southwest corner. (1872.)

son of the writer's mother. As to the discords, musical or otherwise, existing in the choirs of those days, tradition is mainly silent, but human nature constantly repeats itself. No salaries, large or small, were then paid, and it is safe to assume that nearly as much harmony could be found in the hearts of the singers as in their voices.

Resuming now the history of the edifice—

At a special town meeting on April 26, 1790,

"Voted to choose two agents to Dispose of the Donation proposed by Mr. Samuel Symonds, late of Hillsboro, deceased. Voted the Revd Jona Barns and John Dutton be agents to Dispose of the Donation or farm afore mentioned, and that said agents be and are hereby impowered to Deed the same on behalf of said town."

Warrant for March meeting 1790, Art. 11,

"To see what method they will Take to Obtain the Knowledge of the Land Reserved by Colo. Hill for town privilege in Lot No 34 in the 3d Devision."

Pursuant to which it was

"Voted to choose a Committee to inspect the matter encerted in said article, —voted the selectmen with two in addition (viz) Isaac Andrews Esq, Lt Samuel Bradford, be a Committee for the aforesaid purpose and that they make report to the town at the next Legal Meeting."

The committee were not ready at the April meeting, but at another special meeting held June 21, 1790.

"Received and excepted the Report of the Committee appointed to obtain the Knoledge of the Land Reserved by Colo. Hill in Lot No 34 3d Dn which is as follows (viz.) 'June 18th 1790. We the subscribers being appointed a Committee to obtain the Knoledge of the Land Reserved by Colo. Hill in Lot No 34 3d Dn for said towns use having viewed the premises beg Leave to Report as follows—Begining at the Corner of the Revd Mr. Barns walls as they now stand northerly to the Meeting house—thence southerly as the wall now stands to a stake and stones—thence to Extend westerly in equal width thirty rods—thence beginning at the South End of said Land three Rods wide as will best accommodate for a Road out to the Road leading from James Duttons to the Meeting house—also three Rods squar west of said Road near the south side of said Lot No 34 for the purpose of building and improveing a pound.

JOHN DUTTON,
JOHN MCCALLEY,
JOHN MCCLEARY, } *Committee.*'"

At the annual meeting, March, 1791,

"Voted the Committee appointed to Build and finish the Meeting house in said town be dismissed—and one other Committee be Chosen in Lieu thereof. Voted said Committee consist of three men (viz) Voted John Dutton, Isaac Andrews Junr William Taggard be a Committee to build and finish said Meeting house.

9ly. voted to Raise forty pounds for the Use of finishing the Meeting house in said town."

March meeting, 1792, "Voted Not to Raise Money to finish the Meeting house in said town," in response to 11th article in the warrant, but at a special meeting held June 25th of that year,

"Voted to Raise one hundred pounds towards finishing said house." "Voted to choose a committee to settle with the former committee appointed to Build & finish said house. Voted said Committee committee Consist of three Men (viz) Joseph Symonds—Jona Harrick—Joseph Munroe—committee.

August 26, 1793, "voted to allow Lt Wm Taggard to Receive £7–10–0, also Mr John Dutton £15–0–0, it being part of their acct Which they hold against The Town as Committee men on Acct of Building The Meeting hous."

At last, on the 20th of July, 1794, as attested by the Symonds tablet, the house was deemed to be finished, now nearly six years after the inception of the movement for its construction.

At a special town meeting called in relation thereto, Sept. 24th,

"Voted not to accept of the bounds which the selectmen have set for the Graveyard, 4th, Voted to build the wall to Incompass the graveyard as it is staked out, 5ly voted to Move the old Meeting House to the Most suitable Ground near the east end of the Graveyard wall, as near the south side of the wall as can be conveinant, 6th voted to build the wall to Incompass the Graveyard four feet and an half high, and the wall on the south side as much faceing as the stones will admit, 7th voted that the selectmen undertake to prepare the Meeting house to Move."

March meeting (1795) warrant Art. 10.

"To see what Method the Town will Take to establish a Title to persons which purchased pews in the Meeting House Lately built in said Town. 15. To see what the Town will do with the old Meeting house. 16. To see what the Town will do respecting Horsesheds being set on the common or with such as are already Built."

At the meeting,

"Voted that as the pews in the Meeting House are all Numbered it shall be accounted a sufficient Title the Respective owner of a pew, to Have the same Recorded by the Number of the pew, on the Town Book, expressing the flowr which it stands on, the Sum Given for said pew when sold at Vendue, and the Transfers if any has since been, and a Certificate Expressing the purport of the vote, Made out to each owner & contested by the Town Clerk.

15th. Voted to Investe the selectmen with power to Dispose of the Old Meeting House by publick Vendue to the Highest Bidder and appropreate the Money to the use of the Town.

16th. Voted that Joseph Symonds, Isaac Andrews, John Dutton, William Taggard & Thomas Kerr be a committe to Examine the Common, and report where Horsesheds Shall be Built. The aforesaid Committee after examining the Most suitable Ground for Horsesheds reported as follows —(viz)

That Horseshed May be set east of those on the east of the Meeting House—West from the Graveyard gate as near The corner of the wall as can be convenient for the road, and also from the Southeast corner of the pound and west of the Meeting House by the side of the Hill. Voted that the Horseshed east of the Meeting House remain Where they now Stand—Voted that the Horseshed west and southwest of the Meeting house be removed on to some part of the ground assigned for that purpose."

HILLSBOROUGH, May 12th, 1795.

This certifieth that the fifteenth article in the warrant for the last annual Meeting was—To see what the Town Will do with the old Meeting house—agreeable to Which article the Town voted—That the selectmen be Invested with power to Dispose of the old Meeting house by publick vendue to the Highest Bidder.

True Coppey.

CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

HILLSBOROUGH, April 20th, 1795.

Notis is hereby given that the old Meeting house will be sold at publick vendue agreable to a vote of the Town on Tewsday the 28th of April Instant the sale to begin at 3 oclock in the afternoon at the said old Meeting house articles of sale May be seen at Time & place.

CALVIN STEVENS,
SAMUEL BRADFORD 3d. } *Selectmen.*

HILLSBOROUGH, April 28th, 1795.

Agreable to advertizements for the sale of the old Meeting-House as directed by the Town the articles of sale are as Follows:

1st. To be set up and struck off to the highest bidder.

2nd. The purchasor to pay three Dollars on the delivery of the House, and give a Note for the remainder signed with a bond Man payable the Tenth day of october Next.

3d. if any purchasor shall refuse to pay the Money and give the Note—The House to be set up again, and such Purchasor excluded further bidding at said vendue.

4th. No sum to be accounted a bid which is less then one Shilling.

5th. The House to be Removed from the Town land by the Last Day of June next under the penalty of one Shilling pr day paid to the Selectmen for the use of the Town unless by a vote of the Town or a certificate from the Selectmen it is pennitted to remain Longer.

6th. The House with all the appertainances therto at present Belonging to be delivered to the purchasor free of all lawful incumbrances excepting the Materials which Compose the pews above the flowr provided the Money is Paid and the Note given agreable to the 2nd article.

BENJAMIN PEIRCE, *Purchasor.* CALVIN STEVENS.

CALVIN STEVENS, *Vendue Master.*

JAMES EATON
SAMLL BRADFORD, 3d } *Selectmen.*

A True Coppey CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

Pursuant to the Above Notification and articles the said House was exposed to sale, and Benja Peirce Esqr—Having bid sixty five Dollars and fifty cents, which was the Largest sum bid at said vendue, The House was struck off to the said Benjam who agreable to the second article, paid the Money and gave a Note to the selectmen signed by Lt Wm Taggard as surety,

And agreable to the second article the selectmen in behalf of the Town, Delivered the said House with all The priviledges thereto belonging to the said Benjamin Peirce Esquire, his Heirs and assigns to his and their Use and Benefit.

A True Coppey of the proceedings of a vendue of the old Meeting house.

CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

At a special town meeting Sept 3, 1795,

"Voted that the purchasers of the old Meeting House be permited to remove the same partly into the graveyard and east near the wall, and that the said house remain their for the use of the purchasers during the pleasure of said purchasers. Voted to dismiss the eighth article," which read "To hear the Minds of the town respecting voluntaryly assembling and working to level the parade near the Meeting house in said Town, and if the Town should think proper to begin that service this year, then to see if the town will impower the selectmen or some other person To provide rum on the expense of the Town and pass such other resolves as may be thought Necessary to carry the same into effect."

Warrant for March meeting, 1797, 2d article,

"And in addition to the customary Town officers—if the Town think proper to choose a man or men whose office it shall be to keep the Meeting house Clear from dogs on Sundays the insuing year by killing the same if found in the Meeting-house," voted to dismiss. "12th, Voted, that Wm. Taggard and Jacob Spaulding, be allowed the priviledge of building a house on the common as Requested, on such piece of ground as the selectmen shall direct," as set out in the warrant "for the Benefit of their familyes on Sundays."

This house stood nearly on the site of the present school house west of the road, was known as the noon house, divided into four apartments, each of which contained a rousing fire on cold sabbaths in winter, and was a great convenience to the matrons in the way of caring for their children of tender years, who went to meeting according to the custom of those days, as well as furnishing the means of replenishing their footstoves with hot coals to keep their feet from freezing in the fireless meetinghouse, which was not furnished with a stove until 1823. After that time cloaks and mittens were by no means amiss in the wall pews on very cold Sundays. This stove stood in the centre aisle, and its funnel projected through the window back of gallery pew numbered twelve, over the south entrance door. Later it was removed, and two stoves placed as shown in the interior view of the house.

"Town land laid out

"Hillsborough, octr 17th 1799 — whereas the Town of Hill'ro about 10 years since did appoint their selectmen and others as a committee to determine what piece of land (which was reserved in the parsonage Lot for the use of sd Town) should be occupied by sd Town, which did report the extent without making bounds agreable to which report we the undersignors selectmen Having measured sd land do report as follows, that the said land is contained in the following bounds viz — beginning at the north east corner of the graveyard, thence southerly as the Revd Mr Barns's walls now stand fifty rods to a stake and stones in the road, thence westerly thirty rods to a stake and stones, thence Northerly fifty rods to a stake and stones, thence easterly thirty Rods to the bounds first mentioned — also the road from the south-east corner of sd land to Mr Barns's Store to be considered as a part of sd land.

True copy.
pr CALVIN STEVENS, *Town Clerk.*

CALVIN STEVENS,
ELIJAH BEARD, } *Selectmen.*

March Meeting 1800. "Voted Not to raise any money to hire a Master to teach sacred music."

Special town meeting Oct 27, 1800.

"Voted That the old Meeting-house so called be allowed by the Town to Remain on the common where it now stands."

Warrant for March meeting 1801

"To see if the Town will Reconsider a Vote which was passed the 27th of Octr last respecting the old meetinghouse so called, and if Reconsidered, then see what method the Town will Take to remove sd House from the common." At the meeting voted to reconsider the vote, and "to postpone the The Remainder of said article which respected taking measures for the removal of said House untill the adjournment of this Meeting."

which was for the time being the last of the matter. The house seems to have become the property of Rev. Mr Barns, and was later in that year offered by him as a gift to the town, which refused to accept it.

For the following brief mention of the ministers who successively occupied the pulpit of the old meeting house, the writer is mainly indebted to the Annals of Hillsborough, published 1841, by Charles J. Smith, a native of this town, many years a resident of Mount Vernon, N. H., a well written and exceedingly valuable memorial of the early history of the town, written at a time when several of those who had taken part in the transactions outlined in the foregoing pages, were still living.

The Rev. Mr. Barnes was from Marlborough, Mass. where he was born 26 Dec. 1749, graduated 1770 at Harvard college, he married in 1774, Abigail Curtis of East Sudbury, Mass., who died 8 Dec. 1838, at

83 years, a woman of great excellence of character, universally beloved and esteemed. They had ten children, of whom one died in infancy. In the summer of 1803, while riding on horseback a stroke of lightning prostrated him to the ground, stunning him for a time, so far paralyzing him as to disqualify him for his pastoral duties, which he resigned, and died 3 Aug. 1805. He possessed very respectable talents, a vigorous and discriminating mind, and a lively and well cultivated imagination. His manners were dignified, polished and agreeable, a model of clerical urbanity. As a citizen he exerted a commanding influence in maintaining social order, preserving unanimity of feeling, and otherwise advancing the prosperity of the town. In religion he is supposed to have tended towards Arminianism; was not a rigid sectarian, but moved by a truly Catholic and liberal spirit towards those differing with him in sentiment. His salary was for many years inadequate to the support of his household, and he cheerfully assisted in subduing the wilderness besides ministering to his spiritual charge. He received the land allotted by Col. Hill to the support of the gospel, between three and four hundred acres, which he toiled faithfully many years in clearing and cultivating, besides laboring much in the adjacent newly settled towns not yet supplied with the gospel ministry.

During his ministry the plan of the half way covenant,* generally in vogue throughout New England, was here practised, an evil growing naturally out of the ascendancy striven for and largely maintained, of the church in public affairs. By this practice the children of persons not church members were admitted to baptism, and people with no particular confession of faith were often admitted to the church, thereby relaxing its discipline, and at one time taking it to the verge of Unitarianism. But through the exertions of some of its leading members, tenacious Calvinists, and the firm stand taken by the pastor succeeding Mr. Barnes, it was in a few years brought to the firm ground of trinitarian congregationalism. In the two years subsequent to the dismissal of Mr. Barnes, several clergymen supplied the pulpit. Rev. Josiah Moulton preached a few months in 1804, but an effort to settle him as pastor failed through the opposition of nearly half the town (57 for and 54 against). In June 1805 the town and church concurred in a call to Rev. Stephen Chapin, who was ordained June 18 of that year, dismissed 10 May, 1808, salary $400 a year, four sabbaths a year to himself. Through

* "The necessity of being a church member to vote or hold office led to a strong desire on the part of all to enter the church. Hence an act was passed by the Synod of Boston in 1663 recognizing all baptized persons as members of the church, and their children were entitled to baptism. Still they made no profession of faith in Christ, and did not partake of the Lord's supper. This was called the half way covenant."—Brown's Rel. Encyclopedia.

his agency the church underwent an important change in doctrine and practice, dropping the "half way covenant" plan. An experimental acquaintance with religion was required, and an orthodox confession of faith and church covenant were adopted. The resolute stand of Mr. Chapin for the new departure excited the virulent opposition of many persons, and after a prolonged controversy he was dismissed, sharing the fate of his illustrious prototype Jonathan Edwards, who, as a reformer of pernicious practices in church and society, was similarly banished from Northampton, Mass., about 1750. Mr. Chapin and a committee of the town, chosen to act in the matter, substantially agreed in stating the ground of their disaffection to be his refusal to baptize children under the half way covenant, his logical declination to exchange with ministers who baptized on that ground, and who had more than once exhibited the gross discourtesy when exchanging with him, of baptizing children refused by him on that sole ground, and his general course of doctrine and preaching in accordance with his belief as to the proper standard of church membership. During the sifting and winnowing process pursued by him, the most decisive evidence of his earnestness and zeal is the addition of 38 members to the church inside of four years, on a much higher platform of religious belief and practice. The council dismissing him, as well as the church, approved his conduct, and unanimously recommended him as an able minister of Christ, and a man of irreproachable moral character. He was born in Milford, Mass. 4 Nov. 1778, graduated at Harvard 1804, studied Divinity with Rev. Nathaniel Emmons at Franklin, Mass. In Nov. 1809 he was settled over the church at Mount Vernon, N. H., dismissed 1818, by reason of a change in views regarding baptism, next year ordained pastor of a Baptist church at N. Yarmouth, Me.; in 1822 became professor of theology at Waterville, Me.; 1828 president of Columbian College, Washington, D. C., filling the office many years with much ability.*

The town and Church were more than three years without a settled pastor, and in 1811 secured the services of Rev. Seth Chapin, who was ordained Jan. 1st, following, and in 1816 dismissed, having become pecuniarily embarrassed. He was born in Mendon, Mass., 1783, gradu-

* A curious exemplification of the habits of the people at this time, and their notions of the fitness of things, is found in the licensing, by the selectmen, of two liquor stands on the common south of the meeting house, for business on the day of his ordination, one presided over by Daniel Chase and Ezekiel Little, the other by John Taggard and Jonathan Sergeant. How many went reeling home from the house of God that evening is not matter of record. It is small wonder that Mr. C. saw the desirability of a radical change in the administration of the affairs of the church, and resolved to lay the axe at the root of the tree. The house keeping outfit of a young couple was thought incomplete without a decanter and glasses, to be produced, liberally filled when friends, including the minister, called, and the omission of this courtesy was downright shabbiness.

ated at Brown, 1808, took theological course at Andover; settled 1819 at Hanover, Mass., until 1824; resided at Hunter, N. Y. most of the time until 1832; at W. Granville, Mass., to 1835; thenceforward lost sight of by Mr. Smith. About the time of his dismissal, many of the people in the western part of the town having become Baptists, some Universalists, the town declined contributing longer by tax to the support of a minister, throwing the Church on its own resources, the preaching of the gospel being ever since maintained by voluntary subscription.

For the next three or four years, several clergymen were engaged here for short intervals, among them Jonathan Magee, afterwards at Brattleborough, Vt. and Nashua, N. H. In January, 1820, Rev. John Lawton settled here and preached regularly, not called until June, 1821, ordained in November of that year, a successful pastor. Having given offense to a considerable number of his flock by his earnest advocacy of temperance and liberal contributions to missions, he was dismissed at his own request in 1834, having added more than 150 members to the Church. He was born in Hardwick, Mass., Aug. 14, 1780, second son of Jacob and Susanna Lawton, who later removed to Barnard. Vt. He graduated at Middlebury, 1806, married Sept. 14 of that year, Sarah W. Davis,born Hubbardston, Mass., 19th March, 1787, died 22nd Jan., 1824, mother of three sons and five daughters. He married 9th Feb., 1826, Abigail, only daughter of Rev. Jona. Barnes, mother of three children, who died young. He was some time principal of an academy at Poughkeepsie, N. Y , settled over a church at Windham, Vt., 1800, remaining ten years. About 1835 he went west with his daughter Sarah, by canal and Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to Hancock Co., Ill., (preceded the year before by his second daughter Joanna, with a family of their friends,) and settled at Carthage, the county seat, having been appointed a missionary to supply vacant places in the West. The country was new, population sparse--located mostly in the timbered regions. In the new court house, built of logs, he preached his first Illinois sermon to a congregation sitting on benches made of puncheons, over floors of the same material; and there, also, Sarah taught school.

He labored in that field three years, preaching in log school houses and private dwellings, organizing and building up churches in different parts of the country. At Carthage he was active in the cause of education, with other leading men procuring a charter for a female seminary, and went east as an agent to solicit funds for endowment, about 1839. His death at Newport, N. H., 18th April, 1842, with other causes, lead to the abandonment of the seminary enterprise, and the funds he collected were returned to the donors. He was buried at this place. His children married and settled in Hancock county, one son, Jacob, being now at Elton, Neb.

The movement in favor of temperance which began in Boston about 1820, slowly made its way through the country, reaching Antrim in 1823, where it was pushed with zeal and ability by Rev. Mr Whiton. In the course of the next year Mr Lawton took it up with a good deal of earnestness, greatly surprising most of his hearers by inculcation as a Christian duty, abstinence from the use of intoxicating liquors. The seed was sown in unpromising soil, and it was six years before the temperance movement had made sufficient progress to justify an organization for its advancement.

The summer preceeding Mr Lawton's removal to this place is noted for the beginning of the first Sunday school, conducted by F. W. Symonds, his sister Sarah, and Maria Johnson. Mr Lawton's successor, Rev. Milton Ward, a native of Plymouth, N. H., graduate of Dartmouth, 1825, some years a physician in Windham, N. H., ordained minister here July 1834, dismissed Nov. 1835, a few weeks later ordained as minister of the Episcopal church, ministering later at Lynn, Blandford, Mass, and Portsmouth, R. I., there in 1840. Soon after Rev. Seth Farnsworth was engaged as stated supply for a year. then called, and ordained Nov. 1836, " but in the full tide of his usefulness, abundant in labors, with bright prospects for the future, he died suddenly 26 Mar. 1837, of lung fever." He was born in Charlestown, N. H., 14 June, 1755, reared a Universalist, but changing his religious views, pursued a course of study at Kimball Union Academy, Plainfield, N. H., 1817, graduated at Dartmouth 1822, two years home missionary in Vermont, settled 1824 at Raymond, N. H., remaining ten years, supplied at Essex, Vt. a year or more, then settled here. He died a signal example of the triumph of faith. His successor was Rev. Samuel G. Tenney, ordained 4 July, 1838, at the division of the society settling at the Bridge village. The same year, 1839, a new house of worship was built a little southeast of the old structure, and was thence forward occupied for public worship. For the next twenty years the old house was only occupied as a town house. A Methodist society was organized in 1860, and for a short time occupied the new Congregational meeting house, the people worshipping therein being at that time without a pastor, but the example of the zealous handful of Methodists was contagious, the Congregationalists bestirred themselves, and being soon able to settle a pastor, naturally claimed the use of their own house, whereupon the Methodists moved into the old meeting house, which they occupied until the completion of their own house in 1863. They had secured the services of a talented young preacher named Hatfield, who demurred at occupying the pulpit, saying he felt too much boxed up in it. Thereupon severed members of his congregation, possibly with permission

from the selectmen, but with a strange lack of appreciation of the fitness of things, proceeded to cut away the reading desk, to suit the whim of a stranger to the associations connected with that hallowed spot, from which the gospel had been proclaimed to hundreds of worshippers in the preceding century, scarcely one of whom was then living to rebuke the unseemly act.

If the work of despoiling and defacing the house could have ended here, it would have been far less matter of regret, but this was but a beginning. The second step in a downward course is much easier taken than the first. In the course of a few years afterwards, the Congregational Society being about to give an entertainment in the old house, and some of the impatient young people desiring more open space in which to air their manners, the house was entered at night by men from whom better conduct might have been expected, and the body pews north of the east and west central aisle demolished. This reprehensible action was entirely overlooked by the town and the community.

In the meantime material changes in the character and personnel of the population were taking place; farms were every year abandoned and turned out to pasture, their owners going to the Bridge, the cities, or westward, a generation was growing up that cared little for the past, strangers coming in, and murmurs of dissatisfaction began to be heard, about the irksomeness of a trip to the Centre every year to attend town meetings. An attempt made at the March meeting for 1872 to remove the town meetings to the Bridge village failed, but in 1874 a similar effort succeeded, a large number of citizens of that place having agreed to finish a suitable hall free of expense to the town for ten years. The old house, now fairly abandoned to its fate, became the prey of vandals from different parts of the country, including many summer visitors, some of whom were natives of the town. It is likely that many of these viewed with regret the despoiling of the ancient edifice, but seeing no way of arresting it, concluded, (like Goodenough the painter, when he saw the stewed fruit prepared by the housewife for whom he was plying his trade, for pies to grace the dinner table, rapidly disappearing under the surreptitious attacks of the hungry children, and the frequent testing for flavor by the housewife herself while preparing the crust, decided with himself the propriety of taking his share *while it was going*), that the old house was going anyhow, and they would each secure souvenirs of its existence. It has at last been shamefully gutted, only the wall pews on the east and southeast quarter of the lower floor and half of the southeast block of body pews remaining in anything like a semblance of their former condition, scarcely one intact, aside from the disappearance of every pew door, and a worse state of things exist-

ing in the gallery. Most of the windows are badly broken, and rain enters freely through the roof at every storm. Up to the spring of 1889 a pretense was made of keeping the premises under lock and key, the key being freely yielded up to almost any person of respectable appearance, to enter without the presence of the custodian, who plainly could not give his time gratis to attend visitors and at the same time desired to avoid the appearance of churlishness, his only error being too great confidence in gentlemanly instincts and due consideration for the rights of others, on the part of visitors, many of whom superadded to a commendable curiosity, very well in its way, a little of the barbarian inclination to do just a little plundering on their own account, a propensity the exhibition of which is by no means confined to its effect on the house in question. For weeks during the summer of 1889 the house was the nightly rendezvous of a squad of idle boys, whose presence, while not a material injury, was clearly no benefit, saying nothing of the chance of fire, in which case it is a standing menace to the majority of the buildings forming the little hamlet at the Centre.

Not all our people are iconoclasts, however. The number of them in whom the feeling of attachment to and reverence for the memories and works of their ancestors is still a moving sentiment, increases yearly, to the credit of our nature, and their solicitations, reinforced by the protests of thinking people among our annual visitors, led to the passage of the following vote at the March meeting for 1883:

"That a committee of five men be appointed by the Moderator to examine the old town house at the Centre, with a view to ascertain the probable expense of repairing the same sufficiently to preserve it, and report at some subsequent meeting. Said committee are requested to ascertain if possible the nature and extent of the rights of the town in and to said land and house, and also see if some disposition cannot be made of said property which would be alike creditable and profitable to the town."

The committee consisted of Wm. H. Manahan, Jas. M. Wilkins, J. B. Whittemore, W. P. Straw and Chas. W. Conn. With the history of the building and the land on which it stands, deducible from the records of the town, going back nearly 100 years, as accessible to other citizens as to the writer, the necessity of burdening them with the inquiries designated in the latter section of the order, consuming time and involving expense, is hardly apparent. Nothing more appears of record until March, 1886. Art. 9 of warrant reads:

"To see if the town will vote to repair the old town house at the centre, to raise money therefor, and pass any vote in relation thereto."

At the meeting

"A report of the committee on the matter pertaining to the old town house was called for and read by Wm. H. Manahan. It was voted to accept the above report and have it filed with the town clerk's papers. It was also voted to raise a sum of money not exceeding eight hundred dollars, to repair the town house at the centre, and that the selectmen act as a committee to carry out the vote in regard to repairing the same."

Here the matter dropped. The selectmen for that year did not levy the amount voted, nor do anything in the line of repairing the building. It seems a signal misfortune that the three years from 1883 to 1886 were marked by inaction in the matter, as during that time at least one influential friend of the project for repairing died, followed by another in the summer of 1886, their deaths making it more difficult to secure liberal contributions from abroad in aid of the project. It is the opinion of many persons that the authority to make repairs did not cease with the current year in which it was voted, but that it might have been legally done in either of the two subsequent years. A blow, damaging if not utterly disastrous to the hopes of its friends was dealt in the spring of 1889 by the dismissal of an article "to see if the town will take any action on repairing or disposing of the old town house," apparently a victory for those people whose interest was centered in "how not to do it."

A majority of the voters in town are comparatively recent comers, with no interest in the past history of this town. Many of them are young men, living only in the present, and if attached to the memory of their ancestors, naturally casting back ward glances in other directions. Many of them have no settled purpose of permanent citizenship here, and not all of those who have such purpose reflect that the higher considerations of comity that should govern the action of men removing their citizenship from one locality to another, demand that they defer in matters like the one under consideration here, to the views of the people among whom they make their homes for the future. We who desire to preserve the ancient landmarks, who do not desire to tamely acquiesce in the utter demolition of the venerable house to which one hundred years ago our ancestors gladly thronged to hear the word of God, where their children were baptised, from whence their young men and maidens set out on the journey of life, and through whose doors so many have passed to the narrow house appointed to all men, insist that our rights in the matter shall not be denied by a mere majority of numbers. Its walls have in years gone by echoed to the tread of future chief magistrates, senators, jurists, soldiers of distinction, missionaries who spent

their lives in foreign lands, men of action in the busy affairs of life, most of whom have passed away, leaving us only the memory of their useful lives, as incentives to higher and nobler living on our part. Could they return to the scenes of their youth—could they once more file past the ballot box, the majority for preservation would be an overwhelming one.

The old grave yard lying to the northward of the meeting house, while not as available a field for the despoiler, has still shared in the general neglect. The first burial taking place in it that is marked by a headstone, occurred, the writer believes, in 1789. Scarcely more than half of the graves are so marked. Several family plots and three other public burying places in town, besides one a little over the line in Deering, have received the bodies of many of the inhabitants of this town. The population, in its most prosperous days, never much exceeded 1800. Monuments have been erected to 28 persons between 70 and 75 years old at death, 32 between 75 and 80, 52 between 80 and 90, 14 between 90 and 100, and two who passed the latter age, while other cases are known, of similar longevity, unmarked by headstones. Many of them are tilted at a variety of angles, a few fallen flat, now and then one broken. A portion of the yard was shamefully overgrown with brush, but as the result of the noble efforts of a Boston lady, who annually revisits the birthplace of her departed father, an interest in the preservation of the burying ground has been aroused, a few persons have already assumed the care of the graves of their frieuds, and the town deserves credit for an expenditure sufficient to clear off the brush. More improvement is expected to take place in the present season, 1890, and the prospect now seems good that the enclosure will not much longer stand as a disgrace to a civilized community.

It is hoped that the perusal of these pages will recall to the many sons and daughters of Hillsborough, at home and abroad, many pleasant memories of the past, perhaps half forgotten, existing in their own experience or listened to as fireside tales in the long ago, and that this imperfect memoir may serve as one more link to bind their hearts more closely to the past. If we of today, in addition to what we are already doing to advance the standard of a high and noble living, shall faithfully preserve the ancient landmarks, doing all we can to hold up the lives and example of those who have gone before for the guidance of those who will come after us, future generations will rise up and call us blessed.

Where, where will be the birds that sing
A hundred years to come?
The flowers that now in beauty spring,
A hundred years to come?
The rosy lip, the lofty brow,
The hearts that beat so gaily now,
Where, where will be love's beaming eye,
Joy's pleasant smile and sorrow's sigh,
A hundred years to come?
Where, oh where,
A hundred years to come?

Who'll crowd for gold the busy street
A hundred years to come?
Who'll throng yon church with willing feet
A hundred years to come?
Pale, trembling age and fiery youth,
And childhood with its heart of truth,
The rich, the poor, on land and sea,
Where will the mighty millions be
A hundred years to come?
Where, oh where,
A hundred years to come?

We all within our graves shall sleep
A hundred years to come,
No living soul for us shall weep
A hundred years to come.
But other men our lands will till,
And others then our streets shall fill,
While other birds shall sing as gay,
As bright the sunshine as today,
A hundred years to come,
Then, oh then,
A hundred years to come.

W. C. Browne.

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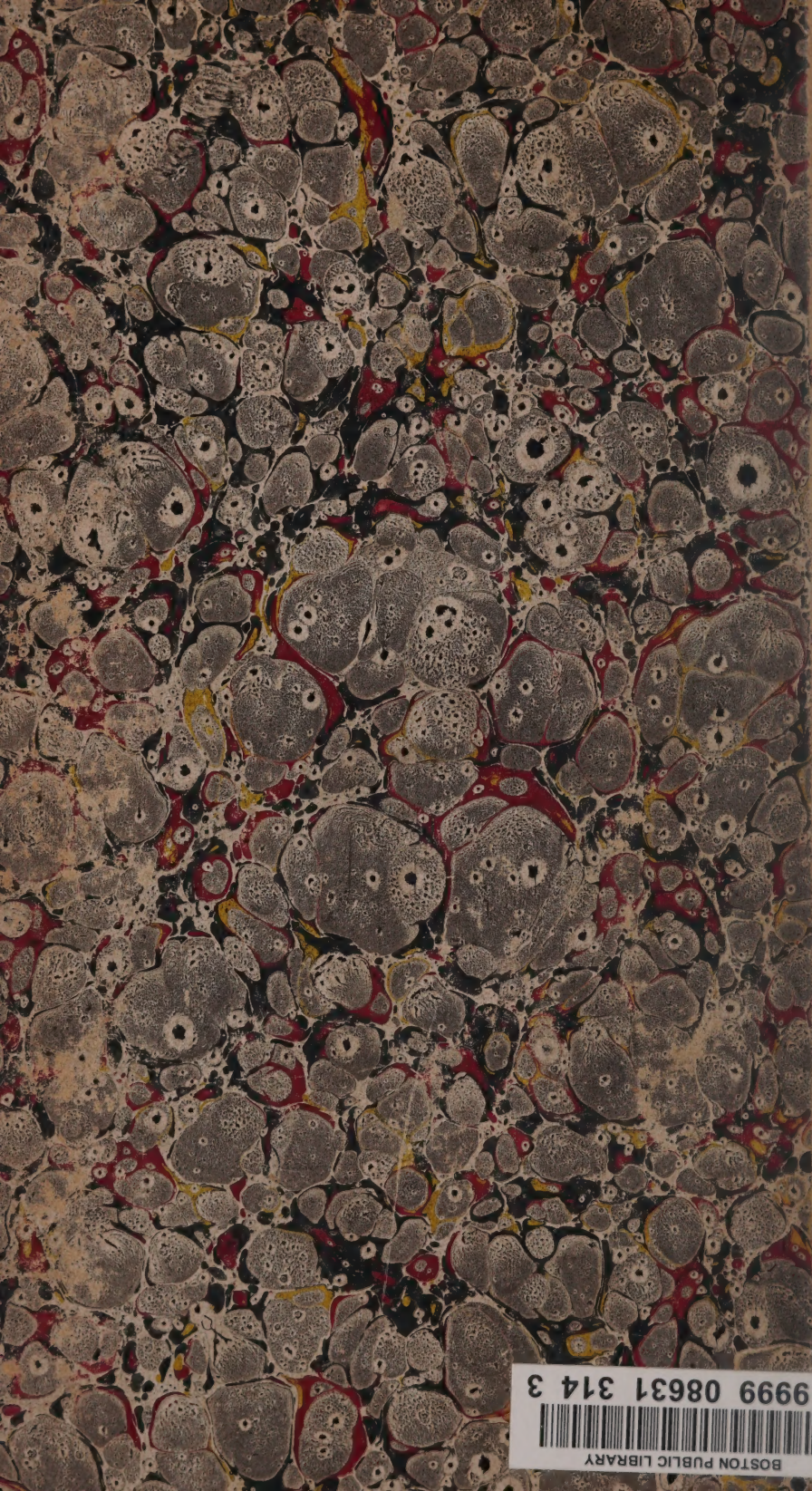
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